

State and Private Forestry

FY 2014 Western Competitive Resource Allocation

Instructions to States

OVERVIEW

The State and Private Forestry (S&PF) organization of the USDA Forest Service reaches across the boundaries of National Forests, States, Tribes, communities, and non-industrial private landowners. Each State uses the support afforded by S&PF assistance to address forest conservation, protection, and enhancement needs. The delivery of S&PF programs assumes that our collective efforts are most effective when available resources are focused on issues and landscapes of national importance and prioritized using Forest Action Plans. This competitive grant process is an effective means of ensuring that federal S&PF dollars are invested in projects that enhance landscapes, address issues of national importance that are identified and supported locally, and provide meaningful, lasting, and measurable outcomes. National guidance and resource documents including draft outcomes, objectives, and performance measures, are available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/>.

FY 2014 PROCESS

For FY 2014, 15% of the S&PF Western regional allocation will be dedicated to funding projects selected through this competitive grant process. The net available **will include** funds in the Forest Stewardship, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health Management-Cooperative Lands, Forest Health Management-Cooperative Lands (National Fire Plan), State Fire Assistance, and State Fire Assistance (National Fire Plan) programs. The Competitive Resource Allocation **will not include** funds from Volunteer Fire Assistance, Forest Legacy, and Federal Lands Forest Health Management programs.

Project proposals will be submitted by States and then screened and evaluated by the FY 2014 Competitive Grant Team. This team is made up of 6 State members representing different states and resource specialties as well as 6 Federal members representing a variety of programmatic, disciplinary, and geographic areas. Recommendations from this team will be considered by the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) in the process of making final funding recommendations. A list of recommended projects will be forwarded to the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Deputy Chief by the WFLC. Final competitive funding allocation will be distributed to States by their respective USDA Forest Service Region.

Projects that engage states outside of the WFLC area will be evaluated in their entirety through one regional process (West, Northeast, or South). Collaboration is encouraged early and often to determine into which process the cross-regional project will go, develop the project, and keep all engaged parties aware of its status. If a cross-regional project is to be evaluated through the WFLC process, it should be submitted by a western State (lead) as a multi-state project. It will be reviewed and scored alongside all other single- and multi-state projects and included in the list of recommended projects forwarded to the Deputy Chief. Final competitive funding allocation will be distributed to States by their respective USDA Forest Service Region.

The following set of instructions create a framework for Western states to identify and articulate how their proposed projects respond to priorities laid out in Forest Action Plans as well as one or more of the three State and Private Forestry National Themes.

GENERAL PROJECT ELIGIBILITY AND SIDEBARS

- State Forestry Agencies are the only eligible lead applicant.
- States are limited to submitting 4 single-state project proposals and can serve as lead applicant on only one multi-state project proposal.

- There is no limit to the number of multi-state projects in which a state can participate as co-applicant.
- Any project proposal that can clearly describe and illustrate accomplishments and benefits in more than one state can be considered a multi-state project, even if all funds are handled by the lead state. (To be considered a multi-state application, it must be submitted on the Multi-State form and all partner states must agree to the application language and budget before submittal).
- Each project proposal (including multi-state projects) will be limited to a \$300,000 request.
- No state will receive more than 15% of the total funds available to the West through this process.
- Projects can indicate a multi-year implementation timeframe, up to three (3) years.
- Projects that include collaboration among multiple entities are encouraged.
- Collaboration and coordination with the USDA Forest Service and other public land management agencies is encouraged; however, grant awards can only be used for work on non-federal (including Tribal) land.

PROJECT PROPOSAL CRITERIA

All project proposals will be screened and evaluated based on the following:

Screening Criteria

Meets the general project eligibility and sidebars	Yes = Eligible	No = Ineligible
Meets the 1:1 non-federal match requirement ¹	Yes = Eligible	No = Ineligible
Clearly addresses one or more of the S&PF National Themes and associated outcomes	Yes = Eligible	No = Ineligible

Evaluation Criteria²

	4-5 pts – High	3 pts – Medium	1-2 pts - Low
Project Overview	Provides a succinct and relevant overview; could easily be used to communicate critical elements and value of the project.	Summarizes the project but has little communication value.	Does not effectively summarize the proposed project.

	13-15 pts – High	5-12 pts – Medium	1-3 pts – Low
Context, Goals, and Objectives	Clearly outlines the issues, threats, and/or opportunities being addressed. Articulates a clear vision, goals, and objectives.	Project context, vision, goals and objectives are present, but underdeveloped.	Project context, vision, goals, and objectives are unclear.

	14-20 pts – High	8-13 pts – Medium	1-7 pts – Low
Proposed Activities	Clearly describes with specificity, activities to be completed with grant funds and leveraged resources. Link specific project activities to funding amounts in the Project Budget and to stated project	Describes project activities and how grant funds and leveraged resources will be used, but lacks detail and/or some resources included in the Project Budget are unaccounted for. Tie to the stated goals and	Insufficient detail is provided as to what work will be completed using grant funds and leveraged resources. Little or no link to the Project Budget or stated goals and objectives.

(1) The allocated grant amount must be matched in full and along program authorities by the recipient using non-federally funded sources, except as authorized for the Insular Areas in 48USC1469a and Amendment of Subsection (d). Matching requirements for dollars awarded through the competitive allocation process may be met through consolidation as currently handled through consolidated payment grants.

(2) Only full point scores will be assigned; no zeroes will be assigned unless a field is left blank. The maximum *total score* any one application can receive is 100.

	14-20 pts – High	8-13 pts – Medium	1-7 pts – Low
	goals and objectives.	objectives may be weak.	

	13-15 pts – High	5-12 pts – Medium	1-3 pts – Low
<i>Deliverables, Outputs, and Outcomes</i>	Provides clear measures of success. Defines deliverables, outputs, and outcomes. Is not open-ended.	Project deliverables and outputs are described, though how they are measured is unclear. Project outcomes are vague or open-ended.	Insufficient detail is provided as to what the project deliverables, outputs, and outcomes are. Unclear or no measures of success.
<i>Collaboration</i>	Clearly describes how partners were engaged during project development and how they will be engaged in achievement of mutual outcomes. Clearly demonstrates integration of S&PF and/or other programs in a meaningful, complementary, and synergistic way that goes beyond traditional relationships (business as usual).	Collaboration with partners is identifiable but contribution to project proposal or commitment to outcomes is limited. Discussion of how partners have been engaged is limited. Integrates S&PF and/or other programs but the contribution of each program is less clear or novel.	Some collaboration appears to exist but is not a meaningful element of the proposal. Does not appear to integrate S&PF and/or other programs in a meaningful way (business as usual).

	9-10 pts – High	4-8 pts – Medium	1-2 pts - Low
<i>Forest Action Plan Integration</i>	Clearly describes the need for the proposed project and relates it to one or more priority issues, areas, or strategies identified in the Forest Action Plan.	Need for the project is apparent but underdeveloped and/or link to Forest Action Plan is unclear.	Little to no information is provided as to why the project is a priority or how it relates to the Forest Action Plan.
<i>Meaningful Scale</i>	Scale of the project is clearly based on and is appropriate for the stated goals, objectives, and outcomes.	Scale of the project appears to be only partially based on or appropriate for the stated goals, objectives, and outcomes.	Scale of the project does not appear to be based on or appropriate for the stated goals, objectives, and outcomes.
<i>Sustainability of Outcomes</i>	Project clearly results in skills and enhanced capacity that extend beyond the life of the project itself. The project will be held up as an example, is replicable, and provides value to others beyond common / typical approaches. Delivery mechanisms are clearly articulated. Include plans already in place or being developed to replicate or expand the project, to build on skills, capabilities, and lessons learned.	Project may result in some limited skills and enhanced capacity building beyond the life of the project, but it is unclear how, where, or when.	Unclear how project will create lasting skills and capacity; would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

DETAILED PROJECT PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposal Form: All blocks are fill-in enabled and character locked. Applicants must fit all information into the allotted character space. Forms that have been modified for any reason will be considered ineligible by the review committee. Any attachments or additional documents will not be considered by the review committee. Single- and

multi-state proposal forms are available in PDF format online at http://www.wflcweb.org/spf_grants_14/. A current version of Adobe Reader is required to open and complete the proposal form; the software is free and available online at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>. Proposals may be re-named, worked on and saved locally, and should be submitted as attachments via email.

Proposal Instructions by Box Number:

- **Filename.** Enter the single keyword that will be used in the proposal filename to identify the project. The state abbreviation will be automatically generated by information entry in the applicant information box.
- **Box 1- Applicant Information.** Enter the State Forestry Agency applicant (and co-applicants in the multi-state form) contact information.
- **Box 2- Project Information.** Enter a descriptive title that is sufficient to identify the location and nature of work being proposed. Identify all partnering agencies and organizations (eligible entities include other State Forestry Agencies, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, Tribal Governments, Local Governments, other federal agencies³, individuals, and private businesses if not excluded by law, regulation, or policy). If listed here, partners can be referenced using acronyms later in the proposal form. Identify the duration of the project: one, two, or three years.
- **Box 3- National Relevance.** Check one or more boxes indicating which of the three S&PF National Themes will be addressed through this project.
- **Box 4- Project Overview.** Provide a comprehensive but succinct overview of the proposed project that includes basic details of who is doing what, where, and why. It should give a reader the “big picture” and will be used to share information about western projects and successes.
- **Box 5- Project Budget.** Enter all project expenses by funding source (grant request, applicant and co-applicant, non-federal contributor, other contributor). When a third party is contributing funds, that agency/organization should be identified by name or abbreviation in the “source” column. Multiple contributors may be included in each row. All qualifying match and additional resources (leverage) should be included in this table. The totals will calculate automatically. The Total Project Cost for the project should be equal to the sum of Project Budget Columns: Grant Funds Requested, Match Applicant, Match Non-federal Contributors, and Non-Match Applicant Non-federal and/or Federal. Totals for “funds requested” and “match” at the top of Page 1 will also calculate automatically based on what is entered here. States have the option of matching through consolidation with non-project-related S&PF funds; doing so will not affect the score of the application. These funds should be recorded in the row marked “consolidated”.
- **Box 6- Context, Goals, and Objectives.** Describe the resource issues, threats, and/or opportunities to be addressed; what is to be accomplished in the short-term (objectives) and long-term (goals).
- **Box 7- Proposed Activities.** What specific activities will be completed using which grant funds and/or which leveraged resources in the Project Budget? Link all project activities to specific funding amounts in the Project Budget. Activities should tie back to stated project goals and objectives.
- **Box 8- Deliverables, Outputs, and Outcomes.** Describe project deliverables, outputs, and outcomes, and the metrics that will be used to monitor progress. Outcomes and outputs should relate directly to proposed activities, goals, and objectives.
- **Box 9- Collaboration.** Describe the contributions each partner has made toward project development and will make during the life of the proposed project, as well as their commitment to the achievement of mutual outcomes. Describe how the project integrates S&PF and/or other programs in a meaningful and complementary way that goes beyond traditional relationships (business as usual) to achieve project outcomes.
- **Box 10- Forest Action Plan Integration.** Describe how this project aligns with stated priority issues, areas, and/or activities in the relevant State Forest Action Plan(s).
- **Box 11- Meaningful Scale.** Describe how the scale of the project is appropriate for and will facilitate the achievement of the stated goals, objectives, and outcomes.
- **Box 12- Sustainability of Outcomes.** Describe how the project will result in skills and capabilities that will extend beyond the life of the project itself as well as how the project will or could be replicated in other areas.

(3) Collaboration with other federal agencies is allowable and resources may be leveraged, but contributions do not count towards required match.

Include plans already in place or being developed to replicate or expand the project, to build on skills, capabilities, and lessons learned.

DEADLINES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **All project proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m., MDT on 9/30/2013.**
- File names should conform to the following guidelines:
 - State_Keyword.pdf – Each project filename must include: 1. State/lead applicant two-letter postal abbreviation and 2. The “keyword” that is on the front of the application (Example: CO_Huerfano.pdf).
- Submissions should be delivered in this manner:
 - Save all proposals as individual PDF files (as outlined above).
 - Send one email (a complete state package) with PDF attachments to Diane Denenberg, ddenenberg@wflcweb.org.